

Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies
Program in International Affairs

DCI
80-6-22
Rosedale Road
Post Office Box 2820
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
609-921-1141

Cable: AspenInst PrincetonNJ

Harlan Cleveland
Director

June 18, 1980

Executive Registry

80-4596

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

This will be the last general mailing from the Aspen Institute's Program in International Affairs. As you already know, I have been appointed (effective August 1st, 1980) the first full-time Director of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. Lois and I will move to the Twin Cities in August. Our new addresses there are:

(Office) Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of
Public Affairs
909 Social Sciences
267 19th Avenue South
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 373-2653

STAT

(Home)

What follows is a review of the work of the Program in International Affairs, which was started on September 1, 1974.

I.

My six years with the Aspen Institute -- a lifetime record for length of tenure in one position -- have been an incomparable opportunity to think hard, write much, and try to serve as a "center of initiative" on a wide variety of international policy issues. With the full backing of Chairman Bob Anderson and his increasingly international Board of Trustees, in close collaboration with that extraordinary intellectual entrepreneur Joe Slater, the Program in International Affairs has probed and analyzed and written and published along five different lines of inquiry.

-2-

In the process, we have convened 84 workshops with a total of 2404 participants from a broad spectrum of professions and disciplines and every part of the world, using all the Aspen Institute seminar facilities (Aspen and Baca, Colorado; the Wye Plantation on the Eastern Shore of Maryland; West Berlin; and Punalu'u, Hawaii) and also meeting in Princeton, NJ; New York; Washington; Dedham and Cambridge, MA; Houston and Austin, TX; Wingspread (Racine, Wisconsin); La Jolla, CA; Tokyo, Japan (International House); Cairo, Egypt; Gajereh, Iran; Ajijic, Mexico; and Nairobi, Kenya.

This activity has been designed to raise questions of public policy before governments and intergovernmental organizations get around to them -- in John Gardner's phrase, to be among "the first birds off the telephone wire." As he has written: "Very few -- almost no -- major policy innovations are enacted at the federal level that are not preceded by years (say, 3 to 10 years) of national discussion and debate. The national dialogue is an untidy but impressive process. Ideas that will eventually become the basis for some major innovation in federal policy are first put into circulation by individuals and small groups. . . ."

As one of those "individuals and small groups," I have taken as an operating principle that we should tackle only issues which are nascent, emerging, even premature -- that is, issues on which our work would be at least two years ahead of the government's necessarily ponderous policy-making. Meeting this test has turned out not to be all that difficult.

II.

In this mode our "center of initiative" has focussed on five kinds of international policy issues:

1. Arms Control

We organized and for five years managed the Aspen Arms Control Consortium, the nation's "first team" of academic research units on arms limitation and national security policy.

Funded mostly by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Consortium initially comprised Cornell, Harvard and Stanford Universities, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the Aspen Institute. That circle has now been enlarged to include the Brookings Institution, the RAND Corporation and the University of California at Los Angeles; a number of research houses around the world, most of them assisted by the Ford Foundation, are active correspondents and sometime participants or even co-sponsors in the Consortium's three or four major workshops each year.

-3-

Consortium discussions on nuclear proliferation, European security, Pacific security, strategic arms control, conventional arms sales policy, U.N. disarmament processes, new military technologies and the defense budget have often presaged notable shifts in the postures and policies of governments.

A full substantive report on Aspen Consortium activity during its first four years is available from the Aspen Institute or The Rockefeller Foundation. The leadership of this continuing enterprise has now been taken on by Paul Doty, Director of the Aspen Institute's Program on Science, Technology and Humanism, which is colocated at Harvard with the JFK School's Center for Science and International Affairs.

2. The Planetary Bargain

Our first project, starting in the autumn of 1974, was The Planetary Bargain, an ambitious effort by a widely representative group of experts to look at all the elements of a "new international order" as a many-faceted bargain, and suggest both policies and institutional innovations for a pluralistic world community. The result was a very different picture of the future from those produced by computerized world order models or by the kind of "architectural" thinking which so influenced earlier theories of world government and produced the "structures of peace" called the League of Nations and the U.N.

It may be useful to recall the framework of this thinking, taken from the original Aspen consensus paper and carried over into the book I wrote for the INTERdependence project, Philadelphia's imaginative contribution to the 1976 Bicentennial:

"The complexity of the issues and the congestion of interest-groups involved (159 nation-states, a hundred major transnational corporations, dozens of nonprofit multinationals, all meeting in 700 nongovernmental conferences and more than 3,000 international association meetings a year) make nonsense of the notion that with one great political act a New International Economic Order might be created. The process, if it works, will be more like a global bazaar, in which negotiators are continuously engaged in parallel negotiations about strategically related but tactically separable matters. Yet the environment for constructive bargaining has to be created by a shared sense that bargains can be struck which advance the interests of all, that a political consensus can be formed by widespread realization that peoples of every race and nation are in dangerous passage together in a world of finite resources, ultimate weapons and unmet requirements."

-The Planetary Bargain, (1975)

-4-

... "There is thus a long agenda of creative effort just ahead. Somehow the community of nations -- or at least of those most concerned -- will need to create a food reserve, assure energy supplies, depress fertility rates, stabilize commodity markets, protect the global environment, manage the ocean and its deep seabed, control the modification of weather at human command, rewrite the rules of trade and investment, reform the monetary system, mediate disputes, reduce the cost of military stalemate, control conflict in a world of proliferating weapons, keep the peace when it is threatened and restore the peace when it is broken."

"It is this impressive agenda, taken as a whole, that will amount to a third try at world order. It will not, this time, feature the creation of some new overarching world organization. Rather, it will be a variety of bargains, systems, and arrangements which reflect the paradox of world order -- that there is no consensus to entrust any nation or race or creed or group with general responsibility for world governance, yet there is an urgent need to tackle problems which will yield only to world-scale solutions."

-The Third Try at World Order (1977)

An important part of this conceptual effort was our attempt to define and project "basic human needs." We commissioned in 1974 the seminal work by John and Magda McHale on Human Requirements, Supply Levels and Outer Bounds, which concluded that despite the then-current gloom about growth limits it is possible to "meet basic human requirements in terms of resource adequacy and without transgressing the carrying capacity of the planet."

Mustafa Tolba, Executive Director of the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP) then asked the McHales and the Aspen Institute to develop a fuller analysis, which was published in the McHale's Basic Human Needs: A Framework for Action (Transaction Books, 1978) with an Introduction in which I suggested that an "international poverty line" was in the making, and traced the "three years of sudden conceptual change, from 1974 to 1977," in which "national development strategies, international negotiations and global organizations have begun to be deeply affected by the simple notion that the purpose of economic development and international cooperation is to meet the human requirements of people, and especially the minimum needs of the neediest."

The work on The Planetary Bargain proved to be so fruitful an approach to the world's palsied North-South dialogue that it gave rise to much further exploration of growth policy and resource systems (see below), and led us quite directly into projects on related issues. One was a series of consultations

on the role of multinational corporations in development, undertaken jointly with the Council on Religion and International Affairs. Another was a major Cairo Conference on Energy Futures of Developing Countries, which has resulted in a book with the same title, published by the Aspen Institute and Praeger Publishers this year.

Yet another related project started with a request from the U.N. Conference on Science and Technology for Development to produce some "general theory" about that complex tangle of policy issues; the result was Dynamism and Development (1979), a substantial essay by I. H. Abdel Rahman of Egypt and myself, which has been widely circulated by the U.N. in six languages and republished this year in the Mexican journal Ciencia y Desarrollo and the international journal World Development.

A further piece of fallout from The Planetary Bargain was a conference I organized in Austin, Texas, while I served as the Tom Slick Visiting Professor of World Peace at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, in the Spring of 1979. The conference, titled "Modernization vs. Equity vs. Tradition: The Explosive Triple Collision," was one of the earliest efforts to draw lessons of global relevance from the sudden turn of events in Iran. (My own comments on that subject were published by the LBJ School in a Pamphlet called "The Triple Collision of Modernization.")

3. Growth Policy and Resource Systems

Another fruitful collaboration with John and Magda McHale took the form of an inquiry into the nature and use of renewable (biological) resources, and information considered as a resource. A ground-breaking international conference on Bio-Resource Potentials for Development was held in the fall of 1978 at the McHales' Center for Integrative Studies (then at the University of Houston) with the co-sponsorship of IFIAS, the Bio-Energy Council, the World Academy of Art and Science and this Program. The interesting scientific papers presented at this meeting are being published by Pergamon Press in a book edited by Alexander King and myself. An introduction by the editors, "The Renewable Way of Life," has also been published in the April 1980 issue of The Futurist. It suggests that the inherent characteristics of the bioresource (it is alive; a ubiquitous, continuous storehouse; resilient, versatile and renewable; self-balancing, full of feedback mechanisms; bulky, limited by natural cycles, variable and finite; interconnected; and essential to human survival) have far-reaching implications for future beliefs, concepts, plans, institutions, power structures and international relations.

-6-

A related line of work in this area resulted from an Aspen Institute international seminar we organized on "Growth, Values and the Quality of Life." For two weeks in Aspen during the summer of 1977, 45 people from eight countries and 33 professions probed the "growth ethic" and tried to determine what its successor as an organizing principle for the future might be. Drawing on these discussions, Thomas W. Wilson, Jr. and I wrote a long essay (published by the Aspen Institute as a short book entitled Humangrowth) which tried to describe "the transition we are in" as people grope for new attitudes toward growth that stress quality as well as quantity.

This line of thinking intersected with developments in the Woodlands Conferences on Growth Policy, an ambitious ten-year inquiry conceived and funded by George Mitchell and undertaken in cooperation with the University of Houston. Two earlier Woodlands Conferences had focussed on resource limits and "alternatives to growth." A partnership among the Aspen Institute, Mitchell Energy & Development Corp., the University of Houston and its Center for Integrative Studies was formed in 1978 to provide the intellectual framework for the 1979 conference on "The Management of Sustainable Growth." Eighteen months of consultations and writings ensued. Eight preliminary workshops were held during 1978 and 1979 -- one each in Berlin, Tokyo and Ajijic, Mexico, four in Houston and one in Aspen -- on topics as diverse as "Information as a Resource," "A Dialogue Between Economists and Futurists," and "The Limits to Government." Ten papers were commissioned from outstanding thinkers in the public, private and academic sectors, and an open competition was held for Mitchell Prize papers on growth policy. I have edited one of the resulting books, on The Management of Sustainable Growth (to be published in late 1980 by Pergamon Press) with chapters by Daniel Yankelovich (with Bernard Lefkowitz), William Lee Miller, Robert Hamrin, Eric Zausner, Willard Wirtz, James O'Toole, Walter Orr Roberts (with Lloyd Slater), Lincoln Gordon, Thomas W. Wilson, Jr., William Sneath, Murray Weidenbaum, Theodore Gordon, and Maurice Strong.

4. Issues of Governance

A longtime personal interest in the puzzle of how to wrap "appropriate institutions" around new technologies led to requests that I chair two national commissions on seemingly technical issues. In both instances the really tough questions turned out not to be technical in nature, but institutional -- that is, issues of governance: what institutions should be built to contain, channel and control new technologies so that they meet human needs and serve human purposes?

The Committee on Remote Sensing for Development of the National Academy of Sciences was charged with examining this new technology for its potential value to developing countries and to suggest U.S. policies on developmental and institutional issues to which the technology gave rise. In the Committee's final report --

-7-

Resource Sensing from Space: Prospects for Developing Countries* -- a number of recommendations are made about how the U.S. government can share this made-in-America technology with others in ways that will keep it from becoming a source of international conflict and make it a major assist to meeting human needs through development.

The Weather Modification Advisory Board of which Secretary of Commerce Juanita Kreps made me Chairman in 1977 was to evaluate the state of scientific knowledge on weather modification in order "to develop a comprehensive and coordinated national weather modification policy and a national program of weather modification research and development." The Board held 12 public hearings throughout the United States and organized international consultations with experts from Canada, Mexico, Israel and a number of Western European nations. Our report in two volumes provides the definitive analysis of the "state of the art," recommends a major national commitment to research and development and suggests the beginnings of an international regime in this field. Senator Adlai Stevenson sponsored a bill to carry many of our thoughts into action; his bill has just been approved by the Senate.

In my letter of transmittal to Secretary of Commerce Juanita Kreps I underlined the need for creative institution building concurrent with the development of an underdeveloped technology:

"The history of our time is sprinkled with instances of new technologies running ahead of the social, economic, environmental, international and institutional thinking that should accompany them. Precisely because the science and technology of weather resources management are still at such an early stage, there is an excellent chance in this field to do things right -- that is, for policy to be made and institutions to be built in parallel with the scientific discoveries and technological innovations."

The interaction of global technologies and global risks has given rise to what Tom Wilson calls "planetary politics." No major project has yet been built around these issues of governance which are by nature global in reach, but some Aspen Institute projects such as "The Assessment and Alert of Major Hazards" (a workshop organized by Elmore Jackson for the United Nations Environment Programme) are beginning to cope with pieces of the problem. And a growing volume of comment in the writings

*The report is available in English and in French from the National Academy of Sciences -- National Research Council.

-8-

from this Program has tried to clarify the conceptual shift that is underway. As I wrote in The Christian Science Monitor at the end of 1978, "future trends in international politics are obviously hard to predict. . .but many of the present signals (among others the sudden awareness of global risk and the demand for a global fairness revolution) do seem to be pointing in the same direction: toward the spreading concept of the 'common heritage of mankind'." Concepts first applied to the non-land environments -- for example in the Antarctic Treaty, in the Outer Space treaties, and in the Law of the Sea negotiations -- seem to be leaking back onto the land and its resources, both natural and man-made.

Last summer in Aspen, the Program in International Affairs with the help of a number of special consultants laid plans for a major project to tackle The Future of International Governance. Work has already begun on two reviews of what regional institutions can and can't do, in the Western Hemisphere and in the Pacific Basin area. (The latter project has now become a cooperative venture of the Aspen Institute and the Humphrey Institute.) Work along these lines will be a continuing concern of the Aspen Institute, and will also find expression in the Humphrey Institute's policy research activity.

5. Coping with Interdependence

Although much of our Program's effort has focussed on world affairs, a continuing theme has been how to help U.S. institutions adapt their aims and workways to rapid change in a world where nations and functions are becoming more and more interdependent. In 1974 a National Commission on Coping with Interdependence was formed at the invitation of Robert O. Anderson, Chairman of the Aspen Institute's Board of Trustees, who served as the Commission's chairman. The Program in International Affairs served as its secretariat.

The Commission's task was "to assess the capacity of Americans to cope with interdependence and consider what might be done to enhance that capacity." The Commission held three meetings, commissioned and published five major pamphlets, and issued a challenging final report.* That report said it in a nutshell:

*The five papers in the Interdependence Series were: No. 1, Michael W. Moynihan, "Attitudes of Americans on Coping with Interdependence;" No. 2, Abraham M. Sirkin, "Living with Interdependence: The Decades Ahead in America;" No. 3, Ward Morehouse, "A New Civic Literacy: American Education and Global Interdependence;" No. 4, Ralph L. Ketcham, "From Independence to Interdependence;" No. 5, Adam Yarmolinsky, "Organizing for Interdependence."

-9-

"We have learned that interdependence is not something to be for or against, but a fact to be lived with now and reckoned with in the future. . . The most important adjustment of all will be to blur, then erase, the psychic frontier between 'domestic affairs' and 'international affairs'."

The Commission's legacy went well beyond its published work. It led us directly into a number of assignments with the government, corporations, trade unions and non-profit organizations on how to organize for a more interdependent future. Among the most interesting of these were a request by the Government agency ACTION to think hard about the future of the Peace Corps*; a role as a founding vice chairman of a new organization -- Global Perspectives in Education, Inc. -- that took on the formidable challenge of infusing the K-12 curriculum with a global perspective; a report to a Presidential Commission on the administration of multilateral diplomacy; an invitation to discuss the implications of interdependence with the governing board of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; and an assignment with the national leadership of the YMCA which helped them develop an international twist to all their programming right down to the community "Y".

And, of course, I have continued to try to explore in my writings the complex implications of the deceptively simple notion that the line between "domestic" and "international" is irretrievably blurred. My article for the March 1979 volume of the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science defines the reciprocal riddle of "the internationalization of domestic affairs and the domestication of international affairs" and calls special attention to the constructive role nongovernmental organizations can play in helping develop policies that reflect this new reality.

Is there unity to be found in this diversity? Those of us who have been working together on these disparate subjects think so. The prism which is common to all Aspen International projects has been a continuing interest in the development of workable institutions -- international but also national and subnational and multinational institutions that together comprise this century's "third try at world order."

*The Future of the Peace Corps, an Aspen Institute Policy Paper published in February 1977.

-10-

III.

What is a "center of initiative"? We are not a "think-tank", which implies a sizeable permanent staff doing basic research or policy research or both; examples are Brookings or RAND and a host of smaller enterprises, some inside but many outside the research universities. Our style has also been quite different from the special-interest nonprofits which concentrate on action to influence an important but narrow range of public policy -- environment policy, defense policy, the Mideast peace process, Southern Africa, human rights, the taming or unleashing of multinational corporations.

The Aspen Institute is in a position to do something different: to select the policy issues that are soon going to be important (whether "urgent" or not); organize a process of catalytic analysis using the basic research of others; use the Aspen Institute's quite remarkable power to convene around hexagonal tables persons from many professions and sectors of society and different cultures, traditions and nations; try in this manner to clarify the issues and identify who should be doing what about them; and deliver the results in understandable form both to policy-makers (often by involving them in the workshops and consultations) and to the wider publics whose comprehension and support are necessary to effective action by the action agencies.

We have tried to avoid a parti pris, a doctrinaire viewpoint, a predictable stance. But we have wasted no time or credibility in claims of neutrality, which is so often another word for ineffectual hand-wringing. I have been guided, I suppose, by the slogan that was tacked up on the corkboard behind my desk when, years ago, I was publisher of The Reporter, a national magazine of facts and ideas: "Always Objective but Never Impartial."

Our "center of initiative" has been nothing if not lean. One Assistant Director, Judy Himes, doing double duty as policy analyst and general manager. One secretary, Dottie Birch, cheerful and indefatigable. Occasional help for a special project -- for example, two scientists and an extra secretary while I was chairing the U.S. Weather Modification Advisory Board. Occasionally a special associate or Fellow: this year, Michael Hirschfeld, a young New Zealand businessman, joined us to learn more about global interdependence and help develop the Pacific Basin project.

Beyond the core staff (no one with tenure), everything else is handled by contracting out, commissioning papers, convening meetings, hiring consultants, and lots of talking and writing. The key tools for such an enterprise are a large phone bill, a sizeable personal professional library and subject file, a happy travel agency, and Xerox charges out of this world. Space and

-11-

services have been rented from our congenial landlord, the Educational Testing Service in Princeton.

It has been an active, versatile and (we think) productive little think-shop, trying to make good on the Aspen Institute's pretension to concentrate on "thought leading to action."

In this mode of operation, much depends on "networking" -- keeping in contact with the many relevant circles of consultation which provide a constant source of stimulation, an almost overpowering flow of other people's research and analysis, and a ready market for one's own ideas and writings. My basic network today consists of the 3,300 people to whom this letter is being sent.

Reviewing my "outside" activities as part of planning for my present transition, I have been struck with how few of them are in any real sense "extracurricular" to the Aspen Institute I have been trying to describe. They arise from the very process of "networking." I find, to my mild astonishment, that I am a more or less active participant -- Board member, committee-sitter, consultant, adviser -- in 52 "outside" organizations: nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, government agencies, corporations, international organizations, professional associations. Each of these relationships thus becomes part of the Aspen Institute's network, and vice versa. And whatever contribution I make to these interactive circles is directly attributable to what I have been thinking and writing as the core of my responsibility to the Aspen Institute.

It's a peculiar job, especially to a person whose professional life has been mostly the exercise of executive leadership. It requires an unusual degree of personal initiative -- unlike executive responsibility in a large organization, where the momentum is built in, actions are mostly reactive to the antecedent actions of others, and the executive's task is very often not to drive but to steer. But that is of course what has made it such an attractively liberating way to make a living -- because I have been encouraged to make my own agenda (and of course raise money to carry it out), because I am expected to write and publish on a wide variety of (to me) interesting subjects, and because the "Aspen Institute family" consists of such bright, supportive and congenial colleagues.

I am especially grateful to Joe Slater who has resisted the normal temptation to bureaucratize, who illustrates in his own day-to-day thinking that everything is related to everything else, who understands that freedom often resides in ambiguity and constructive looseness is the way to unleash administrative and entrepreneurial energies. What Lao Tzu said of ruling a big country also applies in our time to the management of a complex organization of any size -- that it is like cooking a small fish, too much handling will spoil it.

-12-

I am therefore delighted to have been invited to remain a part of the Aspen Institute family from my new base in Minneapolis, serving as a Special Adviser on international programs and continuing as a member of the Aspen Institute Program Council. My new work with the University of Minnesota is thoroughly compatible with this continuing relationship; conversion of the Pacific Basin project to a joint venture is a current and choice illustration.

IV.

A word, in conclusion, about my new institution building task. In addition to its regular legislative support, the University of Minnesota's new Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs starts with an endowment of \$13.5 million and a fund-raising strategy designed to bring that total to \$20 million. Plans are also afoot to fund and erect a special Institute building on the University's Minneapolis campus in honor of Hubert Humphrey. During the coming years the Humphrey Institute will consequently be one of those rarities in American higher education of the 1980s -- a growth enterprise.

It will, in fact, be three enterprises. What is already in place comprises a dozen Institute faculty members, two dozen adjunct faculty members drawn from other parts of the University and 125 graduate students in master's degree programs focussed on planning and on public affairs and administration.

We are proposing to add a battery of offerings aimed at men and women in mid-career who are graduating from successful specialists to general managers in public and private enterprise and other career lines (legislators, top journalists, research administrators, non-profit entrepreneurs) which seem to demand the skills, understandings and attitudes of the situation-as-a-whole person.

We will also have, and can attract, the resources to function as a research-and-analysis institute focussing on public-policy issues and the advanced study of governance -- local, state, national and international. Hubert Humphrey was quite capable of addressing with equal vigor a single family's problem one minute and advocating nuclear arms control or food for peace the next. The Institute built in his honor will try to be equally versatile, and if possible equally vigorous.

In accepting the University of Minnesota Regents' invitation to direct the Humphrey Institute, I defined the mandate as "education for reflective leadership," and suggested that the Institute would need "to work across the University with every discipline and

-13-

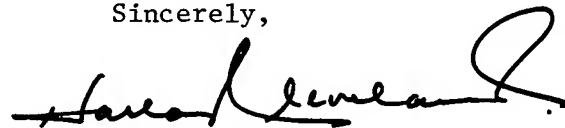
profession, and outside the University with diverse local, national and international communities that are trying to clarify the purposes and develop the techniques for getting things done in the public interest."

This mailing includes the text of what I said to the Board of Regents that day along with a descriptive brochure of the Humphrey Institute. Also enclosed in addition to the piece mentioned earlier -- "The Renewable Way of Life" -- is a center-fold published in The Christian Science Monitor on December 27, 1979 reviewing the decade of the seventies. Another enclosure is an example of public responsibility in action: an address by William Sneath, Board Chairman of Union Carbide, at our Woodlands Conference on Growth Policy. I am also enclosing for your convenience a list of my recent writings during the past three years.

Our Princeton office will self-destruct on August 1, 1980. Thereafter I can be reached at the Minnesota addresses given on the first page of this letter. The major writings listed in the enclosure, and other published works from the Aspen Institute's Program in International Affairs from 1974 to 1980, can be procured from the following address: Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, Publications Office, Wye Plantation, P.O. Box 150, Queenstown, MD 21658.

Do not suppose that my professional and geographical shift will make it harder to keep in touch. My mailing list, from which it is quite difficult to escape, travels with me to Minneapolis. If you visit that lively community, Lois and I hope that you will let us know. In any event, I look forward to hearing from you, and communicating with you, as time and energy and the rising cost of postage permit.

Sincerely,



Harlan Cleveland